



# April 24, 1994 Wyandotte Distinguished Graduate Inductee



## Jack (John) William Laister, Jr. Class of 1932

Jack W. Laister, Jr., Lawrence Technological University, BAE, 1938, is a renowned Aero Engineer who distinguished himself as a pilot, designer and entrepreneur in the aircraft industry.

Jack first became actively engaged in aircraft at Roosevelt High School in 1926 while in the seventh grade. That year the newly formed Aviation Club started to build a full-sized glider. During his senior year, he built his own glider and won his first competition with it in 1933. While at Lawrence Tech., he designed and built one of the first, if not the first, two-place glider with dual controls for pilot training. He won the 1936 National Intercollegiate Gliding Competition with this glider. He also designed and built the famous Yankee Doodle sailplane that was selected to represent the United States at the 1939 Paris Air Show.

With World War II underway, Jack founded the Laister-Kauffmann Aircraft Corporation (1941-1949) and was recognized as the youngest CEO of a major Air Corp contractor during the war. His aircraft corporation employed over 4,000 workers directly and over 1,000 employees at sub-contractor shops. The company developed and produced his famous CG-10A "Trojan Horse." This design is the standard military cargo airlift concept for our country and most of the world's Super Powers.

In 1952, Mr. Laister developed the first Multi-Socket Nut Runner, a type of tool now used throughout the world in the manufacturing industry. Jack's expertise in aviation was shared as he worked for Pacific Airmotive Corporation (1955-1957), Rockwell Aero Commander Division (1957-1960), and as founder and CEO of Laister Sailplanes Incorporated (1965-1980).

Jack is recognized and honored for his many contributions to aviation. His life story was featured on the General Electric Radio Hour during WWII. He was inducted into the National Soaring Hall of Fame (1969) and received the Soaring Society of America's *Outstanding Achievement Award* (1975). He co-designed the much acclaimed Nugget LP-15 Sailplane with his son Bill. The Nugget won the U.S. National Standard Class 15 Meter Competition in 1975. It is the only U.S. built sailplane to win this event. In 1993, the WWII Combat Glider Pilots awarded him their *Michael C. Murphy Service Award*, their highest, for his work in WWII.

Records of Mr. Laister's contributions to the aircraft industry are contained in the National Archives, the National Air & Space Museum, and in Jane's Publication: *All the Worlds Aircraft*. Several museums display and exhibit aircraft built by Jack's companies, including the War Museum at St. Mere Eglise, France. Jack enjoys seeing many of his sailplane designs still in use throughout the world. Today, he remains active writing, doing some engineering, playing a little golf and traveling.